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THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" (a) The costs of medicine actually supplied to the dispensary during the three years from 1951 are given below :—

Year.	RS.
1951–52	4,096
1952–53	2,284
1953–54	5,582

For the year 1954–55, a sum of Rs. 3,500 has been sanctioned by the District Board, Malabar.

" (b) No, Sir."

SRI C. KUNHIRAMA KURUP :—" Sir, will the Hon. Minister be pleased to state on what basis the amount for medicines in local dispensaries is generally sanctioned? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" It depends on the number of patients, Sir."

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR :—" Sir, the average daily out-patient strength of that hospital is 300 and then the entire cost of the medicine for the whole year is Rs. 3,000. Is this not absolutely inadequate and does not the hospital become a farce so far as the patients are concerned? Will the Government seriously consider increasing the amount on medicine at least ten-fold? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" It is desirable to discourage unnecessary medication, Sir."

Prohibition of crossword puzzles and cotton market betting.

* 43 Q.—SRI A. RATNAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(a) whether the present Cabinet are considering any proposal to levy a tax on or to prohibit the crossword puzzles and cotton market betting; and

(b) if so, when?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" (a) At present there is no proposal pending with this Government for levying tax on or prohibiting crossword puzzles. Cotton market betting is already prohibited by law.

" (b) Does not arise."

SRI S. DEIVASIGAMANY :—" May I know, Sir, under what law cotton betting is prohibited and may I also know whether the Hon. Finance Minister knows what cotton betting is and how the game is played? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" I am sorry, Sir, I have no personal experience of cotton market betting. It is prohibited under the City Police Act within the City and under the Gambling Act in the mofussil. The question whether the provisions of the Acts should be still more tightened so that cotton betting could be effectively checked, is still under the consideration of the Government."

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SRI V. R. NAGARAJAN :—" Have the Government seen a recent Press report that the Madras Government are contemplating banning of crossword puzzles? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Sir, it is no use taking the matter on a State level. They can operate from other States and it cannot be prevented. That is why we have suggested to the Central Government to legislate for the entire Union and a Bill in this regard is under the consideration of the Government of India. We have very recently again reminded them again stating that effective immediate action is necessary for this purpose."

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR :—" Since large masses of people in the State are being daily, I should think, robbed of their cash by these kinds of crossword puzzles, and since this matter has been agitating this House for more than two years now, will the Government, instead of waiting indefinitely with great patience for the Central Government to act, take some immediate steps and pass some measures and see that the same is prohibited? And then when the Central Government do enact, these measures can be repealed."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" The hon. Member himself is a lawyer and he can understand the difficulties involved in the matter. As I have already explained, a State law will be absolutely useless as they can operate from neighbouring States in which case the provisions in a State law will not be effective. That is why we have suggested that there should be a Central legislation or that there should be simultaneous action by all the States concerned. The matter is under the consideration of the Central Government."

MR. SPEAKER :—" There are about seventeen questions more and we have only very little time left."

SRI S. DEIVASIGAMANY :—" Sir, I beg to submit that the information that has been given by the Hon. Finance Minister is incorrect. There is no provision in the City Police Act providing for the punishment of betting on New York cotton prices. There are only sections to punish betting or gaming on horses in horse races."

MR. SPEAKER :—" The hon. Member is giving legal opinion. I am not here to hear both sides on the legal aspects of the Acts and decide the matter."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" We have been taking action under the City Police Act and the people have been convicted and dealt with effectively. As I have already stated, if there is any lacuna, it is being looked into. Probably, the hon. Member is suggesting a defence for the possible offenders." (Laughter.)

SRI S. DEIVASIGAMANY :—" On a point of personal explanation, Sir. It is not my purpose to defend the possible offenders. I only wanted that the Government should bring in proper legislation immediatly so that justice might seem to be done."

Re-opening of the Shoranur Metal Industries, Limited, Shoranur, Malabar.

* 44 *Q.*—SRI K. P. GOPALAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that the Government have decided to take steps for re-opening the Shoranur Metal Industries, Limited, Shoranur, Malabar; and

(*b*) if so, when the factory will be opened and re-start working?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) No, Sir.

" (*b*) The question does not arise."

SRI K. P. GOPALAN :—" Sir, are the Government aware that the Central Government have granted a loan of one lakh of rupees to the factory for re-starting work and if so, will this Government also be pleased to grant a loan to the factory to re-start work and avoid unemployment to so many workers? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" Sir, this Government are of the view that it is not possible to grant any further financial assistance to the industry. I am not aware of any decision of the Government of India in the matter and if the Government of India have decided as stated by the hon. Member, we shall look into the matter further and see what this Government can do."

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" Sir, this factory has been closed for a long time at the instance of the Government; because loans have not been paid, they have not proceeded further; steel and iron materials and tools worth some lakhs are becoming deteriorated with the possibility of additional loss to the company. Will the Government see that these materials are sold and the company liquidated or will they proceed logically and take the necessary steps and not allow further deterioration? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I agree that these materials are getting deteriorated on account of their being kept idle. But this Government had no other alternative and they had been negotiating with so many other people and managements. They have been unable to revive the industry and so they decided to close it and bring the materials to public auction. In the meanwhile, if the Government of India had taken decision as stated by the hon. Member, this Government will look into the matter."